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# MAXIMILIAN'S EXECUTION

DISCUSSED,

IN A BRIEF

## REVIEW OF MEXICAN HISTORY.

BY

EDMUND STEPHENSON *R*

(TWENTY YEARS RESIDENT IN MEXICO).

"In States, the wise do oft deplore an act  
That, for the State itself, must needs be done ;  
And truest rulers often dare not stay  
The course that retributive justice takes !  
Thus tyrants for themselves do bring about  
The doom that they have meted out to others."—WILSON.



LONDON:

EFFINGHAM WILSON, ROYAL EXCHANGE.

1867.

*One Shilling.*



## MAXIMILIAN'S EXECUTION, &c.

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AN amiable man, a polished gentleman, an accomplished scholar, a gallant soldier, a magnanimous prince, has been condemned to death by a Republican Court-martial, and the decree has been carried into effect.

The news has been received in Europe with a universal expression of sympathy for the victim, of general condemnation of the act, and of strong indignation against the Mexicans.

Are these sentiments authorized by the circumstances of the case? or were the Mexicans justified in decreeing the death of the unfortunate Prince?

If we would form a correct judgment regarding these questions, we must rise above the passions of the time, and it becomes necessary to make an impartial and extended review of the various circumstances which have concurred to bring about the death we all deplore.

If any man should tell us that the horrors of the great French revolution were due to the violence of a faction and to the sanguinary instincts of a few individuals, without taking into consideration the different causes which had been at work for a long period inspiring the mass of the French people with loathing and distrust of a class, we should think that he took a very superficial view of a grave matter.

In like manner, if we would form a clear idea of the conduct of the Mexicans, we must take into account the influences to which they have been subjected for many years past.

It is well known to all readers of Spanish history that at the

very moment of the triumph of Ferdinand and Isabel over the Moors at Granada, some fanatical men took advantage of the enthusiasm and excitement consequent on the final victory of the Cross over the Crescent, to obtain the establishment of the Inquisition in Spain.

A despotism was thus established over men's minds which enabled the succeeding Monarch, Charles V., to deprive the Spaniards of their political liberties, notwithstanding the gallant resistance of a portion of his subjects.

Commercial monopolies and industrial restrictions followed, and the whole framework of the nation was organized on the basis of despotism over the intellect, the political state, and the industry of the country.

This system which prevailed in Spain was, of course, extended to her colonies, and even in a more exaggerated manner.

Whilst Mexico remained under Spanish dominion, only two ports were open for foreign commerce, Vera Cruz on the gulf and Acapulco on the Pacific: no stranger was allowed to penetrate into the country without special permission of the Spanish King; very few Mexicans were permitted to visit other lands; education was discouraged, and no books could be introduced without the sanction of the Inquisition, which institution flourished in full vigour; the people had no participation in political affairs; they had only to hear and to obey, and a worse preparation for independence and self-government could scarcely be imagined.

However, the Iberian race is a vigorous one, which, before it had been enervated by the influences of despotism, produced heroic men, great generals, daring navigators, and literary talent of first-rate order, and is in fact the only one that competes with the Anglo-Saxon for the peopling of the New World, and the time arrived when its descendants resolved to be free.

In 1810, a conspiracy was discovered in Mexico which had for its object the independence of the country. Orders were given for the arrest of the chief conspirators, and these, in order to save their own lives, raised prematurely the standard of insurrection. They were joined by multitudes, and the nation was aroused, but without knowledge, combination, or plan.

Many excesses were committed by the disorganized masses, which were cruelly revenged by the Royalist commanders, but

which alienated the influential classes in the towns, who thus became the chief supporters of Spanish rule.

After ten years of a most bloody and desolating war, the insurrection was practically suppressed, although some small bands contrived to maintain a precarious existence in the wildest parts of the land.

However, soon afterwards, in 1821, the army and the Clergy, supported by many influential citizens, and in reality the party that had been fighting against the insurrection, determined to separate from the mother country, but with the design of establishing a monarchy for a Spanish Prince. The King of Spain refused his consent to this plan, but meanwhile the Independence of Mexico had been achieved, and Iturbide, the successful General, seated himself on the vacant throne. He relied for support chiefly on the Clergy and the army, and these two bodies managed to secure the lion's share of the spoil.

No religion was to be tolerated except the Roman Catholic, and this Church was to be allowed to continue accumulating property, and succeeded in eventually obtaining a vast proportion of the wealth of the country. The Clergy and the members of the army were exempted from the jurisdiction of the civil magistrates, and could only be prosecuted before their own class tribunals, and thus became, in most cases, practically out of the reach of justice.

A couple of privileged classes were thus created, but as the Clergy possessed the wealth and influence over people's minds, they were the dominant one, and the army became their tool: they possessed a more substantial power than any Government, and could overturn or elevate any they pleased.

Iturbide soon fell, and his Empire was replaced by a Republic; but the essential conditions remained the same.

Successive Presidents, in the exercise of Government, discovered that the interests of the nation were antagonistic to those of the Clergy, that the bondage to a class was irksome, and, as the Executive has always been in want of money, they were continually longing for a share of the enormous wealth which the Church had accumulated; but, on these occasions, a rival General was soon supplied with the means for a revolution. The obnoxious President of the time was easily deposed, and

his place occupied by another man who might promise to be a more docile instrument.

But like results were ever recurring from the same causes, and the belief is general in Mexico that the Clergy have been the chief instigators of the continual revolutions and civil wars which have desolated the country.

This system received a severe shock during the war with the Americans in 1847, when the governing classes and the army were proved incompetent to save the capital from foreign occupation, and, when peace was restored in 1848, a moderate Liberal Administration remained in power; the army was reduced and re-organized, and the President, Herrera, was allowed to conclude in peace his four years' term of office, and his successor, Arista, was constitutionally elected.

But the officers of the disbanded army, Santa Ana, and the Clergy, had recovered courage after their defeat, and had made their combinations, in virtue of which a revolution was effected in 1853. Arista was obliged to flee, the Constitution was destroyed, and Santa Ana was proclaimed absolute Dictator by the triumphant revolutionists.

A pure despotism was thus established, supported mainly by the Clergy and the army,—a clerical and military despotism, in fact, in the middle of the nineteenth century!—and for Dictator, the man most abhorred in Mexico, owing to his thorough immorality, and who was strongly suspected of having betrayed his country during the war with the United States.

The Mexicans, notwithstanding their incomplete political education, were much dissatisfied with such a state of affairs, and to their honour be it said, they had the spirit to commence the struggle for freedom against a host of opposing circumstances.

The army was hostile, and the Clergy, with all their wealth and influence, and also the greater number of the richer people, who preferred rather to bear the ills they had than incur the dangers to persons and property which necessarily ensue on a state of civil war.

The people were thus devoid of the elements for an organized resistance, and, to gain freedom, they were obliged to plunge into insurrection for the second time in their short history. The standard was raised in 1853 in the mountains of the South



by Ignacio Comonfort, in the State of Guerrero, under the protection of Juan Alvarez, a veteran of the War for Independence.

The movement spread, parties of guerillas increased to regiments, and ultimately became armies, and, after much bloodshed, disorganization, and suffering, the clerical and military despotism was overthrown, and Santa Ana compelled to flee.

A national insurrection may occasionally be necessary for a national regeneration, but it shakes the very foundations of society. In all such conflicts, strong passions are evoked, and bold, strong men, with small consciences, are very apt to rise into prominence.

When a contest of this kind takes place betwixt an impatient people and their arbitrary rulers, the true difficulty consists not in the destruction of the obstructive Government, but in the labour of re-organization.

The successful popular leader finds that his hardest task commences in the very hour of his triumph. When he assumes the work of government, passions must be calmed, pretensions moderated, ambitions checked, bad men nullified, irregularities, which had to be tolerated in a state of civil war, must now be discouraged, and a pacific administration has to be reconstructed on new principles.

Ignacio Comonfort, the courageous leader of the Liberals, experienced all these difficulties when he became President in 1855.

Religious freedom, the supremacy of the law, and equality of all men before the civil tribunals, were proclaimed, and the ownership of the lands and houses belonging to the Clergy was to be converted into a yearly interest charge.

But a violent section of Comonfort's own party urged him to make larger and more radical reforms than he thought prudent; and, when he declined to carry their views into effect, they formed a most virulent opposition, at the same time that he was harassed by the conspiracies and intrigues of the defeated Conservatives.

Embarrassed by the difficulties of his position at the close of 1857, he unfortunately resolved to make a *coup d'état*, believing that, through his personal prestige, he could form a new party more prudent than the Liberals, but more progressive than the

Conservatives. He miscalculated his forces. Doblado, the powerful constitutional Governor of Guanajuato, refused to support the *coup d'état*, and his example was followed by Parodi, the Governor of the important State of Jalisco. The Conservatives took advantage of his false position ; that portion of the army on which he relied was induced to pronounce in their favour, and Zuloaga, the General of these soldiers, proclaimed himself President.

Comonfort then endeavoured to undo the mischief he had caused : he abdicated the Presidency, and Benito Juarez succeeded to the vacant post, as being the constitutional Vice-President, from having been elected to the Presidency of the Supreme Council of Justice, and Comonfort, as a simple General under the orders of Juarez, attempted to defend Mexico, but was defeated, and the clerical and military party thus obtained possession of the capital, with the materials of war kept there, and again tried to impose their despotism on the country. Their Generals, Osollo and Miramon, completely defeated the Liberals under Parodi and Doblado at Salamanca in the spring of 1858 ; and notwithstanding that Osollo died soon after, their dominion was quickly extended over the greater part of the land by Miramon, Marquez, and Mejia.

All that had been done since the fall of Santa Ana, in 1855, was nullified, and the struggle for freedom had to be re-commenced with Juarez, the constitutional President, as the representative of legal authority.

When Juarez assumed the Government, he found himself under the necessity of abandoning Mexico, and afterwards Guanajuato, Guadalajara, and Colima in quick succession ; and he found no abiding place until he established himself in the pestilent Vera Cruz.

But he was not disheartened, and his Generals, Degollado, Doblado, Arteaga, Vidaurri, Berriozabal, Uruga, Zaragoza, and Gonzalez Ortega maintained the fight throughout the country against Miramon, who had supplanted Zuloaga as the Conservative President. After a number of bloody conflicts, of many disastrous defeats, followed ultimately by inspiring victories, the Liberals at last gained the decisive battle of Calpulalpam at the close of 1860, and Juarez entered the capital again after a second most disorganizing and impoverishing war of three years.

Miramon and his subordinates had shot many Liberals in the course of this war, and one of them, General Leopoldo Marquez, went so far as to shoot, after his victory at Tacubaya, seven medical men who were arrested in the act of curing the wounded Liberals who had remained on the battle-field. Nor did he pay any regard to national rights, for one of these seven noble victims in the cause of suffering humanity was an Englishman. But Juarez and his colleagues of that epoch were averse to the punishment of death, and after the victory of Calpulalpam, they are supposed to have connived at the escape of Miramon and his followers, and their triumph was unstained by a single execution.

The work of reorganization, which was interrupted by the unfortunate mistake of Comonfort in 1857, had to be re-commenced under greater disadvantages.

The great principles of religious freedom, of equality before the tribunals, and of subordination of all classes in the State to the civil Government were confirmed: the immense possessions of the Clergy were declared to be national property, and were ordered to be sold, and monastic establishments were suppressed.

But the Clergy party, although defeated, were not subdued: the Bishops Munguia and Lavastida continued to use all their influence to embarrass the Government, and in an evil hour they were banished the country. They came to Europe with large resources, and in Rome they were promoted to the rank of Archbishops. They and their colleagues, defeated in Mexico, now made Europe the scene of their intrigues.

In 1821 the chiefs of this party wanted a Spanish Monarch: in 1855-57 they manifested the same desire, and in 1861 they devoted all their energies to obtain a French Intervention for the triumph of their ideas, and they were favoured by several concurring circumstances. The religious element was brought to bear powerfully upon the French Empress, whilst her husband was hallucinated with visions of bright streams of silver and gold from the Mexican mines which should henceforward flow to France instead of to England, and Paris, as a mart for the precious metals, was to become a rival of London: an opening was to be found for adventurous spirits in the mystical and romantic land of the Moctezumas, and a portion of the large unemployed French army could there be advantageously occupied in raising a barrier to the

spread of the Anglo-Saxon race. Nor were other agencies wanting. Bonds, known by the name of Jecker, had been issued for the nominal value of some millions of dollars by Miramon in exchange for money, arms, and soldiers' clothing, required by this chief for the prolongation of his war against the constitutional President Juarez. Of course, when Juarez succeeded in suppressing this military revolt of Miramon and colleagues, these bonds were not acknowledged by him, but a large portion of them appear to have been distributed amongst influential persons in France for the purpose of obtaining French assistance to drive away Juarez again, and to substitute in Mexico a power more likely to recognise this debt. Also the British bondholders were persuaded that by the establishment of a European Government of some kind in Mexico, their bonds would become more valuable; and even large mercantile and financial houses in London and Paris were induced to petition their respective Governments in favour of an Intervention in Mexico, because they were anxious for the re-establishment of peace and order in that rich country, and did not properly recognise the fact that the Mexican nation had been making a terrific struggle for freedom, to break away from the old despotic ideas of Spanish Colonial Government, and to place themselves in harmony with the march of civilization in the nineteenth century. Also the fact was carefully disguised that the larger and worst portion of the excesses charged against the Mexicans, such as breaking the seals of the British Legation in order to steal \$600,000, the property of the bondholders, had been committed by the very party that now solicited French aid to impose again their despotic yoke on an unwilling people, and were thus about to provoke a third demoralizing war.

Earl Russell, on behalf of his Administration, replied to the British memorialists in a letter dated October 5th, 1861, which was published in the London *Times*, that an armed Intervention in Mexico was neither expedient nor justifiable. But, notwithstanding, when he found that the French and Spanish Governments had resolved to intervene, he determined to take part in the Intervention, with the hope of reducing this to some reasonable limits, and the Convention of London was signed at the end of the same month.

When the forces of the three Powers reached Vera Cruz, they found themselves in the predicament of having nothing to do.

The British Minister, Sir Charles Wyke, and the Spanish and British Commanders saw that the Government of Juarez was doing all that could reasonably be expected, under the circumstances, to restore the reign of order after the protracted wars without checking the march of improvement, that it was willing to do its utmost for the due fulfilment of treaty obligations, that it offered all the guarantees at its command for the satisfaction of the three Powers, and they quickly arrived at the conviction that, instead of hostilities, it was worthy of consideration and support.

The result of this conviction was the Convention of the Soledad, which was arranged in February, 1862, by the representatives of the three Powers, with Manuel Doblado as Minister of Juarez.

This was signed in good faith by the Spanish and British authorities, but not in the same spirit by the French. These availed themselves of the Convention to remove their troops out of the hot, unhealthy country of the coast, and past the formidable defences erected by the Mexicans at the naturally very strong position of the Chiquihuite, and when the time arrived for throwing off the mask, regarding the real intentions of Louis Napoleon, they refused to comply with the stipulated conditions; and, in the conference which ensued between the allied representatives, the French Minister, M. De Saligny, unblushingly avowed that he considered as of no value the Convention to which he and the French Commander had given their assent and attached their signatures, and by virtue of which they had got their forces out of a very unfavourable position.

The Mexican General Almonte arrived from Paris under French protection, with the avowed design of inducing his countrymen to revolt against their existing legal Government of Juarez, and to receive as Emperor the unfortunate Archduke Maximilian of Austria, and, in fact, as the agent to obtain this result by fair means, or by foul; from the French camp he commenced his intrigues, to endeavour to seduce from their allegiance officers serving in the army of Juarez, to obtain partisans throughout the country, and inviting people to pro-

nounce against the constitutional Government with which the French representatives had just formed a treaty, and which latter had really by this very treaty got the French army into a position which rendered possible these intrigues, and who thus most unworthily abused the generosity of the Administration of Juarez, and the confidence reposed by it in European honour.

The Mexican Government remonstrated against the continuance of French support to these hostile intrigues, and its remonstrances found echo in the Spanish and British authorities.

The French then repudiated the Convention of the Soledad, and commenced war against Juarez, but refused, under the most trivial pretexts, to comply with the treaty obligation to return to the positions they had occupied before signing that Convention.

The Spanish and British representatives protested against this proceeding of France: they refused to take any further part in the Intervention, and withdrew with all their forces from Mexican soil.

The French army, under Lorencez, then marched on the road leading to the capital, and finding on the 5th of May, 1862, a portion of the Mexican army, under Zaragoza, decided to offer battle at Puebla. The French soldiers were at once ordered to charge; they fought with their usual vigour, and did their best to win, but, nevertheless, they were driven back by the Mexicans with severe loss, and retreated to Orzaba to await reinforcements.

When those reinforcements arrived, and General Forey replaced Lorencez in the command, the French troops in 1863 again marched on Puebla, which place had meanwhile been strongly fortified by the Mexicans, who had now concentrated there nearly the whole of their regular army.

In the interim, the victorious Mexican General Zaragoza had died of fever, to the great regret of the nation, for he was brave, prudent, honest, and patriotic, and had evinced considerable military talent in his short career. His place was taken by Jesus Gonzalez Ortega, who thus assumed the defence of Puebla.

General Forey commenced a regular siege, in which there was hard fighting and much valour displayed on both sides. However, comparatively little impression was made on the place after repeated attacks, for the besieged bravely maintained their

ground, until provisions and munitions of war began to fail. Juarez then confided to the former President, Comonfort, another army which had been hastily formed to advance to the relief of Puebla. But it was composed chiefly of raw levies, which, owing to the national impatience to succour the defenders of Puebla, were forced to risk a battle before they were sufficiently disciplined, and they were easily defeated at San Lorenzo by Forey, who captured the stores designed for the beleaguered city. The garrison then destroyed their useless arms, abandoned the defence, and each man was left at liberty to escape from the place as best he might.

Forey now found the road open to Mexico, and immediately advanced on that capital, which was abandoned by Juarez, because the materials for resistance had been lost at San Lorenzo and Puebla. Consequently, Forey entered the City of Mexico in triumph in the autumn of 1863.

A Regency was then formed, composed of General Salas, the Prebend Ormachea, and General Almonte, who had come from Paris as the agents for placing Maximilian on the throne of Mexico.

This trio, supported by French troops, and in conjunction with M. De Saligny, the French Minister, elected in the capital the Members of an Assembly to decide on the future government of the nation, and, as a matter of course, this mockery of a national representation decided to transform the Republic of Mexico into an Empire, and to offer the throne to the unfortunate Maximilian, without any restrictions, but with the prudent proviso that, in case the Archduke should not accept of this curious national offer, Louis Napoleon should be empowered to send an Emperor to these modern imitators of the frogs who asked Jupiter for a King.

A deputation was despatched to Miramar to ask Maximilian to accept the crown. This Prince replied that he was willing to do so providing the offer should be ratified by the Mexican people.

This difficulty was easily obviated. Nearly all the veteran soldiers of Juarez had been destroyed or dispersed at Puebla and San Lorenzo, and he, after abandoning Mexico, had to remove his Government successively to San Luis Potosi, Monterey,

Chihuahua, and even as far as Paso del Norte, on the extreme northern frontier, before the triumphant progress of the French. These, and some forces that were organized by the Regency, soon occupied the greater part of the country. In all the places they entered, of course, all the officials were changed, and the political and municipal authority was transferred to members of the Conservative party who were willing to get up an act of adhesion to the Empire. These documents became sufficiently numerous to induce Maximilian to notify his acceptance of the crown, and in 1864 he entered Mexico in company with his talented and brave-hearted consort, whose melancholy bereavement we all deplore.

The Conservatives, amongst whom have hitherto been included in Mexico the clerical and military party, expected now the final triumph of their ideas, and that affairs would return to the position in which they were during the despotism of Santa Ana in 1853-55, and that the reforms which had afterwards been effected during the Liberal Administrations of Comonfort and Juarez would be nullified.

But a bitter disappointment awaited them. The new Emperor soon manifested a decided sympathy with Liberal ideas, and he adopted all the great principles for which the Liberals had been fighting since 1853. He formed his Government with men of a moderate Liberal character, including some who had served as Ministers during the Administrations of Comonfort and Juarez, and he endeavoured to obtain the confidence and support of the Liberal party.

The Liberals were disorganized owing to the defeat of their troops, and the continual retirement of their own Government further from the centres of population, and the occupation of these by authorities acknowledging the Empire. Many of their prominent men began to look on the resistance of Juarez as hopeless; they were tired of civil war, and finding that Maximilian ratified their laws and principles, that he was supported by a magnificent French army, that he could negotiate loans in Paris, that foreign capitalists were competing before him for the concession of railway lines and the establishment of banks, which are two of the great wants of the country, and that he personally was a most amiable man, educated expressly for the



task of governing, very industrious, exemplary in his conduct, and that he had a valuable coadjutor in the Empress Charlotte, they saw here such a conjunction of favourable circumstances as had never been witnessed before in Mexico, and they hoped that he would be able to consolidate the peace and order which was so greatly required ; and consequently the men who reasoned in this manner resolved to make a sacrifice of their predilections in favour of the Republican form of Government, and to support a Liberal Emperor.

The Conservatives had previously been vanquished in two desperate wars by the Liberals ; firstly, by Comonfort, and, secondly, by Juarez, and now they found themselves deserted and their ideas condemned by the Emperor on whom they had fixed their hopes, and they likewise were completely disconcerted as a party when Maximilian proclaimed Liberal principles ; but they were already compromised to the Empire, and could only look forward to finding themselves in a worse position if this should prove a failure.

Maximilian was then in a very favourable position, and his popularity was so greatly increased during his tour through the interior of the country in August and September, 1864, from his personal intercourse with great numbers of people, that if he had resolved to consult the nation at that time, his title would have been ratified by many votes, perhaps by a majority.

But, unfortunately for himself, he soon manifested great lack of sound judgment, as also of political tact and discrimination.

He ought to have taken advantage of the disorganization of the two great parties, and to have formed a new one, composed of all moderate men, and of the lovers of order, of social advancement, and material progress. He could have done this by inaugurating a new epoch of prosperity, coupled with progress and respect for existing rights.

Whilst he had credit in France, and the support of a fine army paid by Louis Napoleon, he ought to have made a sweeping reform in the antiquated, inefficient, and burdensome financial system of Mexico. He could have encouraged commerce by reducing the exorbitant maritime duties which offer such large inducements for smuggling transactions, and by abolishing entirely all the Custom Houses in the interior of the country,

which form a great impediment to traffic, and are a continual source of annoyance and loss to all classes of the community; and this latter measure would have much pleased the agriculturists, because it would have freed their produce, all of which is at present subjected to the payment of duties when it enters any town or village for consumption. Also the miners would thus have obtained free the different articles they require of native produce, whereas all they consume are burdened with duties. Then he ought to have made an arrangement with the contractors for the Mints to annul the clause requiring that no gold or silver shall leave the country uncoined, and to have immediately allowed the free exportation of all metals or metallic ore.

By such reforms he would have given new life to commerce, agriculture, traffic, and mining, and, especially in the latter branch of the national wealth, the change would have been of immense importance, and would, in reality, have transformed into a very important industry what is now very little better than a lottery, because, as miners have to purchase the articles they consume at higher prices, because of the duties that are levied, and afterwards they are compelled to realize in the Mints at eight and a half dollars silver which would produce them ten dollars if they could remit it freely to England, they labour under such disadvantages, that they cannot afford to extract or beneficiate the poorer ores, which are exceedingly abundant. Such changes as these might, in a few years, have raised the production of silver and gold in Mexico from twenty millions of dollars per annum to ten times that amount. By such a system the national wealth would have made a rapid advance, and acquiescence in his Administration would have speedily followed.

The Emperor did none of these things, but made the burdens heavier, and the restrictions tighter, and thus prevented an expansion of the national traffic and industry; and when people are poor and find it impossible to become richer by their labour, they are very apt to become discontented.

In lieu of the old method of finance which has proved such a continual failure, he ought to have organized taxation in conformity with those teachings of science which have been approved by modern experience; and when treated on proper

principles, Mexico is quite rich enough to pay for the expenses of its Government.

At the same time, a prudent administrator would have, without delay, given his anxious attention to the formation of an army on the best possible plan, and an efficient police, and a simplification of the administration of justice for the prompt castigation of criminals.

In view of such administrative improvements properly carried out, and accompanied by a liberal encouragement to enterprise in the various branches of national industry and wealth, the Mexicans would soon have recognised in Maximilian the ruler they had so long desired, and he would quickly have had so much of their support as to enable him to dispense with foreign assistance.

Instead of these reforms, so greatly needed, he began to issue a number of laws and regulations unsuited to the circumstances of the country, but which successively threatened the interests, aroused the fears, and wounded the prejudices of all classes of society. He obtained the hatred of the Clergy by sanctioning the reforms made by the Liberals; but he also began to lose part of the confidence which some of the latter had been willing to repose in him, because various of those reforms, although ratified by law, were permitted to remain a dead letter in practice, and there was a vacillation and a succession of advances followed by retrograde movements which inspired distrust. Then all the holders of the confiscated Church property, who had bought and received titles from the State, were required to present their documents to the new Government for an arbitrary revision, which caused them loss of time and money, exposed them to rival claims, and rendered their property unsafe and unsaleable. Next, all the military officers were compelled to present to another tribunal their claims to the grades they held, and a general lowering of titles was the result, to the intense disgust of this class.

Then all the owners of land and houses were burdened, annoyed, and alarmed by another decree, ordering all their property to be re-valued in such a manner as had the effect in most cases of doubling or trebling their taxes, and of throwing on them a very exorbitant charge for the valuation.

All parties and all classes were thus estranged. Men who at one time were disposed to support the Emperor became first lukewarm, afterwards passive, and lastly, actively hostile.

Likewise, acting under bad advice, Maximilian issued a most cruel decree, ordering that all persons taken in arms against his authority should be shot as robbers ; and history will tell of the multitudes that thus met an ignominious death in the most sacred of all causes, namely, that of defending, under numberless disadvantages, their native soil from foreign invasion and domination. General Don Jose Maria Arteaga was one of the first victims of this sanguinary edict. He had been twice Governor of the State of Queretaro, and several times in high military command, where he might with impunity have abused his position, during the chaos consequent on civil war, to become rich, but his integrity was unblemished, and he died in absolute poverty. At the time of his death he held the commission of Juarez as chief of the Liberal army in Michoacan, but, notwithstanding all these circumstances, he was executed as a robber, together with General Salazar and a number of other officers taken in war, and the Imperialist officer who shot them, Colonel Dr. Ramon Mendez, was promoted by his master to the rank of General and Chief Commander in the department of Michoacan.

An obligation, under heavy penalties, was imposed on occupiers and managers of farms, to give information to the French or Imperialist Commanders of the movements of the Liberal forces, and several pacific citizens were summarily shot, because, whilst they were in such a position as to be completely at the mercy of the Liberals, they had omitted to give the required information to the enemies of the latter.

Also, it is notorious that on several occasions the French and Imperialists shed the blood of their opponents most unmercifully ; for example, Baron d'Aymard, in command of a French division in Michoacan, surprised the Camp of Regules, and made a terrible slaughter, and he stated in his dispatch to Marshal Bazaine that his men had made a free use of the bayonet, *and that they had taken no prisoners.* But, in the published version of this dispatch, it was merely said that he had gone through the Liberal camp at the point of the bayonet.

Great numbers of men, who were afterwards the bitterest enemies of Maximilian, took up arms purposely to obtain revenge for the loss of some beloved relative, or valued friend, or old companion, who had been unjustly killed in defiance of the usages of war, and the rights of humanity.

It is written that he who slayeth by the sword shall perish by the sword; and is it strange that when this Prince was vanquished and taken prisoner after many conflicts, much bloodshed, and great sufferings, he should be judged by the measure he had meted to others, that his own example should be followed, and his life should be forfeited as an example that existence is as dear to the lowly peasant as to the proud descendant of a kingly race.

In consequence of the various errors and short-comings already cited, and of many others, Maximilian soon lost the brief popularity which he had enjoyed in the beginning; his friends diminished, and his enemies increased; trade, agriculture, and mining were all paralyzed, and the nation daily became poorer and more discontented.

The Washington Government, even while at the worst of their great civil war, had protested against the European Intervention in Mexico, and against the Empire which was created through French instrumentality; and, as they made progress in suppressing the rebellion of the South, their position became more decided, and their language to Louis Napoleon so clear as to leave no doubt that, if he did not withdraw his troops from Mexico, a war betwixt France and the United States must eventually result.

This inspired confidence in those Mexicans who were unfavourable to the Empire and to foreign domination, and the armed adherents of Juarez multiplied on all sides.

Most of these were deficient in the organization, discipline and armament necessary to enable them to compete with the French in the battle-field, and thousands were killed in the numberless petty contests that continually occurred; but in the long, thirsty marches, under a burning sun, through clouds of dust, or under pelting showers, along the miry roads, which became almost impassable during the rainy season, in their ability to endure privations and hardships of all kinds, and to carry on

hostilities without a commissariat and without baggage, and in their stoical indifference to danger or death, they were incontestably superior. Also at Puebla, under Zaragoza and Gonzalez Ortega, and when commanded by Corona in Sinaloa, by Porfirio Diaz and Garcia in Oajaca, by Regules in Michoacan, and Parra in Jalisco, and by Escobedo, Trevino, and Martinez at Parras, Santa Gertrudis, and San Jacinto, they proved themselves capable of fighting as bravely and as well as Europeans.

The French soldiers were harassed by a multiplicity of marches, which generally caused them some sickness and loss, and they were involved in petty hostilities, in which victories gave them no glory, but disaster or defeat brought great dishonour, and they grew tired and disgusted with such a useless and apparently interminable war.

These hostilities were waged in all parts ; no district could be said to enjoy peace ; commercial, agricultural, and mining operations were paralyzed, the country more impoverished, and the Empire had a constantly-increasing difficulty to obtain the funds it required. Consequently a large portion of the expenses had to be borne by the French Treasury, and this disgusted the French people.

Associates in a losing cause are very apt to quarrel, and to blame each other, and in Mexico we had another example of this tendency of human nature. Maximilian, and Marshal Bazaine, the French Commander-in-Chief, from a very early period of the Empire, began to have difficulties and misunderstandings, and at last it became notorious that what one desired the other was almost sure to oppose, and the Emperor commenced to speak bitterly against the French.

The Mexican expedition was not popular in France, not even with the army, and it would have been a monstrous political blunder on the part of Louis Napoleon if he should have drifted into a mighty contest with the United States in order to carry on a disappointing, expensive, sanguinary, and unpopular Intervention in Mexico. He therefore very wisely determined to make a sacrifice of his self-esteem, and to withdraw from a bad and unsuccessful enterprise.

It has been asserted that the Emperor of the French unworthily abandoned Maximilian, and that he is in some way respon-

sible for the melancholy fate of the last-named Prince. But an impartial history will show how reluctantly he withdrew from Mexico before the overwhelming force of circumstances, and in consideration of the paramount duty which he owed to his own subjects.

As the political horizon in Europe grew darker, and it became evident that Prussia was about to commence a war for German Unity under her sway, and that, in the face of such a crisis and remodelling of the balance of power, France ought to be free from embarrassing complications in the New World, the representations of the United States were made stronger, and the impatience of the French people to get rid of the Mexican incumbrance was plainly manifested, at the same time that Louis Napoleon continually received disheartening accounts and palpable proofs of the errors and lack of governing power of the Mexican Emperor. Under this irresistible pressure from all sides, aided doubtless by his own knowledge that, if France would maintain her influence, she must concentrate her energies, and the growing conviction that no good was to be expected from a continuance of Intervention in Mexico, he at last agreed to desist from what had been his favourite enterprize.

But even then he stipulated for such a long and gradual evacuation as to give Maximilian a chance of organizing other means for the maintenance of the Empire.

He even attempted to evade a full performance of his promised retirement by sending out regulations and permission for the French soldiers and officers to be transferred to the Mexican flag, and when this manœuvre was defeated by the energetic remonstrance of Mr. Seward, who showed that this would practically be a continuance of the Intervention, he did all that lay in his power to obtain for Maximilian the support of Belgian and Austrian legions, and the latter were only prevented from going to Mexico by the prompt manifestation of the Washington Government that they should consider such despatch of troops as a cause for war.

In July, 1866, the brave-spirited Charlotte came to Europe, and attempted in vain to secure more support for the tottering Empire, until her reason gave way before the keenly-felt disappointments she had to endure.

For Louis Napoleon there remained no alternative but evacuation pure and simple. The Austrians and Belgians dared not send new troops; and as the adherents that remained to Maximilian in Mexico were obviously insufficient for the security of this unfortunate Prince, the French Emperor endeavoured to persuade him to abdicate, and to return to Europe.

In the meantime Maximilian had justified the distrust of the Liberals by throwing himself again into the arms of the clerical and military party. Theodosio Lares, who had been Minister during the despotism of Santa Ana, was made Prime Minister, and Generals Miramon and Marquez were recalled from exile.

It must be remembered that in the second great war for supremacy betwixt the Conservatives and the Liberals, Miramon was proclaimed President by the first-named party, and that Marquez had made himself conspicuous as the most sanguinary and unscrupulous of all their chiefs; and to these two attached the blame of having taken forcible possession of the \$600,000 in the British Legation.

In the beginning of the Empire they were amongst its most prominent supporters, but the British Government insisted on their being sent away as a condition before recognising the Administration of Maximilian; and as likewise at that period this Prince wished to conciliate the Liberals, to whom these two men were particularly obnoxious, he complied in so far as to send them to foreign countries on missions invented for their employment. They were now brought back, and all possible preparations were made for a renewal of the old struggle betwixt Conservatives and Liberals after the French evacuation.

But Maximilian was irresolute, and became discouraged, and in October, 1866, he determined to withdraw before the French, and came down as far as Orizaba on the way to embark at Vera Cruz, and he had even chartered a vessel in that port for his effects, and for those attendants and adherents who desired to leave the country, but he could not resolve to abdicate the throne.

The French desired that he should renounce the crown and go away, because they would then have been at liberty to treat with Juarez, whom they foresaw must quickly triumph, and who was consequently the only man that could give effective protection to



the French residents who wished to remain in Mexico. In return for the guarantees that Juarez could give them for the security of French persons and property, they would have delivered to his Commanders the strong places of Queretaro, Mexico, Puebla, and Vera Cruz, with the materials of war therein, and the country would have at once returned to a state of peace under a Liberal Government.

The Conservatives decided to do their utmost to prevent this result, and as their only chance for renewing the old war, they brought all kinds of influences to bear on Maximilian to induce him to return from Orizaba to the capital, to serve them as their only possible centre of union, and through his medium to retain possession of the towns already named, and the necessary means for a continuance of hostilities.

Maximilian appears to have convinced himself that the French were his worst foes, that to them was chiefly due the failure of his Government, and consequently they were the objects of his strong dislike; he did not wish to do anything which might facilitate their operations for retirement, and most probably we have here one of the chief motives for his foolhardy return to the City of Mexico. He resumed the Government, but now only as the chief of a desperate faction; however, the French could not disavow the man they themselves had brought, and when they retired, he remained occupying the strong places previously cited. He named the sanguinary Marquez General-in-Chief of his forces, and Governor of the capital, and to the unscrupulous Miramon he gave the command of a military district, and sent him with a small army into the interior as far as Zacatecas, to collect resources by levying forced loans in all the principal towns through which he passed, and the contest was once more betwixt Conservatives and Liberals.

Many of the Mexicans had hitherto been disposed to palliate in some degree the errors of Maximilian, in consideration of his alleged ignorance of the true state of their country, and his supposed subjection to French influence; and with the prospect of the long-desired peace which they expected to follow on the French evacuation, there was a very general desire that he should get away safely to Europe; but when he returned from Orizaba, and, with Marquez and Miramon for his Generals,

re-commenced the war which under various forms had desolated the country since 1853, there was one universal shout of indignation, and this was the last sin which they could not forgive.

A portion of Miramon's army under his personal command was completely defeated by Escobedo and Trevino near Zacatecas, but the rest, under the command of his second, General Don Severo del Castillo, were at some distance from the scene of the battle, and made good their retreat to Queretaro.

The Emperor now, in February 1867, determined to concentrate the greater part of his troops in Queretaro, where Miramon was already with Castillo and General Don Tomas M. jia. General Don Ramon Mendez evacuated Michoacan and effected his junction at the above-named town, at the same time that Maximilian and Marquez entered with nearly 3,000 men from the capital. He collected in Queretaro about 10,000 men, having left garrisons in Mexico, Puebla, and Vera Cruz, but he was immediately besieged by about 20,000 Liberals under Escobedo. The fortifications which Maximilian occupied had been perfected by the French; they were strong, and he made a brave defence, but it was evident to all impartial observers that his cause was a desperate one.

The Liberals occupied the whole country, and immediately cut off all supplies, not merely for Queretaro, but also for the other three fortified places occupied by the Imperialists.

In March the Liberal General, Don Porfirio Diaz, commenced the siege of Puebla with about 10,000 men, and General Benavides invested Vera Cruz, and prevented anyone from entering that port except by sea.

The Imperialist General-in-Chief, Marquez, succeeded in getting out of Queretaro with some cavalry by a mountain path which had been left unguarded, and returned to the capital, where he hastily pressed into his service all the men he could arm, and, collecting his available resources, he started on the road to Puebla to relieve that place, which was being very hard pressed by Diaz. But when this last-named energetic soldier perceived the movement, he decided to take Puebla at any sacrifice, and after some most desperate fighting, which is reported to have cost him 3,000 men, he carried the town by assault early in April. He im-

mediately turned upon Marquez, who, however, made good his retreat to Mexico with some slight loss.

Since February, the Liberals around Mexico had been sufficiently numerous to interfere very seriously with the entrance of the necessaries of life, but when General Diaz arrived before that city in April, the siege commenced in a more formal manner.

In the meanwhile, hard fighting was going on at Queretaro, and the Conservative officers who accompanied Maximilian felt that they were combating for their lives; they had slain prisoners without mercy, and, if vanquished and taken, they expected to suffer the fate they had dealt to others; and the Liberals, having surrounded the greater part of the men who had kept the country in war since 1857, determined that they should not escape.

It must still be fresh in the public memory how provisions became daily more scarce within the Imperialist camp at Queretaro, and their position desperate, and how at length, on the 14th of May, Maximilian and his Generals resolved to make an attempt to break through the hostile lines. But treason was at work. Lopez, the favoured officer and trusted friend of the misguided Prince, determined to abandon and betray a falling cause.

On the evening of that day he offered to sell to Escobedo the strong position of Santa Cruz, where the Emperor slept, and his proposal was immediately accepted. In the dead of night, the Imperial garrison, at the orders of Lopez, were marched out, and their place silently occupied by a portion of the Liberal troops commanded by Colonel Don Jose Rincon Gallardo. These waited patiently until daylight, respecting the slumbers of the fallen Monarch; and when Maximilian arose in the early morn, and his betrayer Lopez hoarsely whispered to Rincon Gallardo, "That is the man," this chivalrous Liberal officer, a worthy scion of a noble race, full of a generous feeling, desired to give the unfortunate Prince a chance of escape. Pretending not to know him, and seeing that he was not in military uniform, he said to Maximilian, "Oh, you are a citizen, we do not want you," and gently pushed him out of the place. A man of a more practical turn of mind than Maximilian, or one more accustomed to an adventurous life, would have availed himself of this generosity to quickly vanish from the scene of immediate danger; but this

was foreign to his nature. Absolutely thrust into liberty at Santa Cruz, he rushed to the Cerro de la Campana to join his Generals, and still resist. But resistance was no longer possible, and he, with all his soldiers, were obliged to surrender at discretion on the morning of the 15th of May.

The besiegers of Queretaro immediately advanced to join Porfirio Diaz in the siege of Mexico, which was defended by Marquez with the energy of desperation.

For a long time no provisions nor fuel had been allowed to pass into the capital, and already many of its inhabitants were perishing of hunger when Queretaro fell.

Marquez was officially advised of the capture of the Emperor with all his officers, and he was requested to deliver the capital, which he no longer had a legitimate motive for defending, but he sternly refused, and, concealing the news, he absolutely ordered rejoicings to be celebrated for a fictitious victory of Maximilian, which he invented in order to deceive his soldiers and the people.

Now did Maximilian experience the sad result of his own bad act in appointing the savage Marquez to be his General-in-Chief and Governor of the capital: for this monster, taking counsel only of his own ferocious nature, heeded not the peril of his master and of his old companions, but, regardless of what their fate might be, resolved to continue a useless defence, and thousands of people miserably perished by battle, pestilence, and famine !

Not only did Marquez disregard the death and sufferings of the poor, but in order to extract money from the rich, he imprisoned all that refused to comply with his demands, not merely natives, but likewise British and foreign merchants without distinction ; and we are told that, with a characteristic refinement of cruelty, he had them placed in rooms at the highest story, exposed to the greatest heat and to the flying balls, and refused to give them food until the money he wanted was paid.

Of course, all business and trade were suspended, and the streets deserted by all the men of peace, because the pressgang was ever active to catch all they could to oblige them to take part in the defence, so that only women, or children, or aged men could venture in search of the scanty means of subsistence.

We are not yet fully acquainted with the horrors of that dread time in the City of Palaces, the beautiful Mexico, but the following incident, related in a letter from there, dated on the 27th June, and which has been published in the English newspapers, may give us an idea. The writer mentions that in a family consisting of father, mother, and three small children, the mother sickened and died, and nothing to eat remained in the house: the father ventured out to seek provisions for his little ones, locking the door to keep them safe until his return. He was caught by the remorseless pressgang, who hurried him off regardless of his prayers and deep despair, and when after three days he in some manner succeeded in reaching home, he found all his young children sleeping with their mother in death!

When such heart-rending disasters were being caused by Maximilian's officers in Mexico for above a month after the Emperor became a prisoner, and similar miseries were taking place, although on a smaller scale, at Vera Cruz, which port also refused to surrender, when people in all parts of the country were being distressed by ruinous exactions to maintain the war, and when more than 20,000 men, women, and children had perished in the sieges of Mexico, Queretaro, Puebla, and Vera Cruz, can we wonder that at length arrived the hour of retribution for the man who by his culpable folly and wrongheadedness had made himself the direct visible cause of all these sufferings and deaths?

In Mexico it is notorious that Juarez is not a sanguinary man, but on the contrary averse to the shedding of blood, and when he previously triumphed in 1860 in the second great contest with the Conservatives, he allowed all his enemies to escape, and did not order a single execution after concluding by force of arms a civil war of three years.

The delay which took place in the execution of Maximilian and of his principal Generals was doubtless owing to the secret desire of Juarez to have some plausible occasion for sparing their lives; and if Mexico and Vera Cruz had capitulated when their commanders received official advice of Maximilian's capture, he would probably have found an excuse for clemency in the universal joy of the nation at the restoration of the long-desired peace.

It had been expected that as a consequence of the signal triumph

at Queretaro, the capital and Vera Cruz would be delivered, but when Maximilian's own General-in-Chief continued a useless but terrible conflict, the indignation of the impatient people could no longer be restrained, and on the 19th of June, after thirty-five days of suspense, the decree of a Court-martial was carried into effect, and Maximilian, in union with his Generals Miguel Miramon and Tomas Mejia, was launched into eternity.

When the news reached Europe of this tragical end to the Archduke's career, there was a universal sentiment of sympathy and horror, and Juarez, together with the Mexican nation, was very harshly censured. But now, when we perceive the various causes which led to this sad result, can we venture to say that, if we had undergone the same sorrows, losses, and privations, at the hand of a foreign Prince, we should have been more generous or merciful than the reviled Mexicans?

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After Maximilian's death, Mexico was taken by Porfirio Diaz on the 21st of June, and Vera Cruz capitulated on the 27th of the same month; and thus terminated the great war against the Intervention, and was finally achieved the triumph of the Liberals represented by Juarez over the Conservative, clerical, and military party.

It cannot be said that no excesses were committed in this protracted contest by the Liberals, or that all who fought in their cause were actuated by worthy motives. Unfortunately, in all long civil wars violent passions are evoked, the restrictions of society are unloosed, and bold, unscrupulous men take advantage of circumstances to trample on individual rights: such has been the case in all countries under similar circumstances, and Mexico cannot claim to have formed an exception to the general rule. But the Liberal party have certainly done their utmost to restrict as much as possible these unavoidable evils, and they deserve great credit for their readiness to endure privations, and to expose their lives, and for the constancy and valour they have

displayed in freedom's cause under the most discouraging circumstances.

Will the Liberals be able to maintain peace in Mexico, and consolidate order, and give the requisite security for persons and property ?

Many persons, judging of the future by the past, despair of seeing Mexico peaceful and prosperous ; but I am more sanguine, and I think that now there is a fair chance of better times for that rich land.

The Conservative power is completely broken, old prejudices have been dispelled, public opinion has become more enlightened, and the Liberals now possess the material strength requisite for settling the country. There is likewise a decidedly higher moral tone in the victorious party, owing probably to the fact that this last war partook more of the character of a national struggle against a foreign domination, and men were thus induced to take an active part who would not have mixed themselves in a mere party warfare, and the result is greater morality, and more respect for social guarantees, of which we have already evidence in the prompt repayment of the loan which was made to General Don Porfirio Diaz when he entered Mexico for the payment of his tired soldiers. Also their prominent men have been tried through a long period of adversity, and those who have bravely stood the test have a proud right to the nation's confidence. No one can now doubt the patriotism, constancy, and integrity of President Juarez, and of his Ministers, Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada and Iglesias, who adhered to him in such evil days, that even hope itself was nearly lost. Then the patriotism, energy, and military capabilities of such men as Porfirio Diaz, Escobedo, Corona, Trevino, Regules, and many others, have been clearly manifested.

The great danger for Mexico would be in a division of the Liberals, and that they should begin to fight amongst themselves. This was attempted at the end of last year by Jesus Gonzalez Ortega, who claimed the Presidency in virtue of his office as President of the Supreme Council of Justice, and because the Presidential term of Benito Juarez had expired whilst the extension of hostilities over the land rendered impossible another election. But no persons were found willing to second this attempt,

because they see the danger, and they feel that if Mexico continues longer in civil commotion, the country will be occupied by the people of the United States, and the Mexicans will disappear from their native soil.

The second peril is, that they may not find a Minister sufficiently able, clear-sighted, and resolute to make the necessary administrative reforms in the military and police organization, financial system, and criminal law, and without which there will be no true progress, because there will be no stability. But public opinion has made great progress in favour of such reforms; they have long since been promised by Juarez, and there is a fair hope that now they may be effected, and that an epoch will be inaugurated of expansion and activity in all the branches of national wealth, and that in succession enterprizes will be encouraged for the development of the natural resources which abound in that favoured region. The last advices state that Juarez had formed a Government composed of men professing moderate opinions; that political executions had ceased; clemency was being shown to the remainder of those who fought or served in the cause of the Empire, and the threatened confiscations had only been carried into effect in some very few exceptional cases. Iglesias, a man of ability and integrity, had been appointed Prime Minister with the portfolio of finance, and this appears to indicate that a resolute attempt is about to be made in order to effect the necessary reforms in this vital branch of national administration.

The next evil which has to be remedied they share in common with the United States. The Liberals have most unfortunately adopted the pernicious error of considering all votes as of equal value, whether they come from an ignorant or an educated man, from one who pays few or no taxes, or from the largest taxpayer in the State, at the same time that they allow every man to vote, and that they pay salaries to the Members of the Legislature; and the result is with them, the same as in other countries where this erroneous doctrine prevails, namely, that trading politicians intrigue successfully on the ignorant majority, and become the predominating power in the Government; but the system is not so firmly established as in the United States, and it is still possible to modify their electoral machinery so as to make the



Legislature a fair representation of the wants and interests of the nation.

It is not an easy matter for a nation to change suddenly from a state of universal war to that of complete peace ; the ocean waves do not sink to calm immediately after the storm has passed, and it is not improbable but that some isolated efforts may be made to protract the reign of disorder ; but I feel confident that such will quickly be suppressed, and that they will not spread, because the elements for another large civil war no longer exist.

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